

FOUR HOPEWELL FROG AND TOAD EFFIGY PIPES FROM THE SQUIER AND DAVIS COLLECTION: TEXTURE, DETAIL, GENUINE WORKS OF ART

by
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In western folklore toads and frogs are considered repulsive—even the embodiment of ugliness. In contrast, these four effigy pipes show a different portrayal of such humble creatures. There was an attention to detail in sculpting these pipes that conveys both a sense of motion and life with such quality that they can be considered nothing less than genuine works of art.

These fine Hopewell effigy pipes from the Squier and Davis collection held in the British Museum stand as testimony to the creativity and skill of the prehistoric sculptors of the Ohio Hopewell who created them. Details of texture, shape, concept and form are apparent in these clear Museum photographs accompanying this article. The catalog descriptions state that all four pieces were found in Mound 8 at Mound City, and date them from 200 B.C. to 400 A.D. with the Hopewell Culture of the Middle Woodland Period.

As is the case with many Hopewell pipes, each was created in a posture that directly faces the smoker. Figures 1 to 5 show various angles of an effigy pipe depicting a seated frog. Museum notes state that it measures 6 centimeters in length, 3.4 centimeters width and 4 centimeters in height, and that it was made of "dark red pipestone."

As can be clearly seen, the amount of detail that is absent in the Squier and Davis black line drawing (figure 6) is quite apparent than this example. This is unfortunate because the pipe shows such deliberate attention to detail. Overall, the figure appears positioned in such a way it suggests animation. The frog is depicted with prominent brow ridges above the eyes. Carved lines and marks along the side and lower end of the body suggest joint creases above the animal's front and back legs, and carved marks along the back and lower end suggest tension in the animal's muscles. There is also a deliberate smoothness depicted in the frog's skin from the polished look of the stone. And incredibly—on the side of the figure, the Hopewell sculptor has created small bulging areas between the front and back legs depicting the motion of a soft belly expanded in mid breath.

A pipe fragment of another frog is pictured in figures 7-10. It measures 6.7 centimeters in length, 3.8 centimeters width and 3.2 centimeters in height, and it was "made of cream coloured pipestone" and was "re-constructed from excavated fragments," according to Museum notes.

Similar deliberate details can also be seen in this effigy fragment of a frog or toad. The incised lines, leg creases, and smooth texture of the stone suggesting are prominent, especially in the suggestion of smooth and delicate skin under the animal's throat. Figure 11 shows the Squier and Davis drawing again greatly understates the considerable detail of the actual object.

A wonderfully conceived toad effigy pipe is shown in figures 12-16. Museum notes state that it measures 6 centimeters in length, 3.5 centimeters width and 4 centimeters in height, and that it was "made of a red/brown porphyric stone/pipestone."

In this example, a quite different type of amphibian is portrayed. While the object has considerable damage, the photographs show that a great deal of attention was paid to representing the texture of the animal's skin. The rough texture of the skin is represented by deeply scored block or square patterns. Additionally, the rear view of the animal conveys a sense of the puffiness, almost heaviness in the way it has been shaped.

A more fragmented toad pipe is shown in figures 17-20. Museum notes describe the platform as "largely intact" but "a third of the effigy/bowl has been lost." Notes state that it measures 10 centimeters in length, 4 centimeters width and 4.5 centimeters in height, and that it was made of "light coloured pipe stone." It is interesting to note how differently conceived a rough textured skin—or perhaps camouflage markings or both is depicted in this piece compared to the skin in figures 12-16. A more rounded and random pattern is scored across the surface of the piece. While the pipe is considerably fragmented across the head of the animal effigy, it nevertheless, holds a similar quality of detail and ingenious conception, most

notably in the representation of skin texture.

The accomplished artistry of these particular pipes leads the discussion in this series of articles on pieces from the Squier and Davis Collection to shift away from archaeology to viewing them as works of art in their own right. In some respects the British Museum photographs let the pipes' remarkable beauty speak for themselves. Nevertheless, the photographs highlight that the Ohio Hopewell likely had a rich culture. The sculptors who carved these pipes with such wonderful conception and form were indeed gifted. Whatever ceremonial purpose, iconic significance or clan associations such depictions of amphibians may have had, these pipes also hold aesthetic qualities—qualities that make them extraordinary objects in themselves.

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Figure 1

Figures 1-3:
British Museum
photos of seated
frog effigy pipe.



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

Figures 4 & 5:
British Museum
Photos of seated
frog effigy pipe.

Figure 6:
Squier & Davis
Drawing

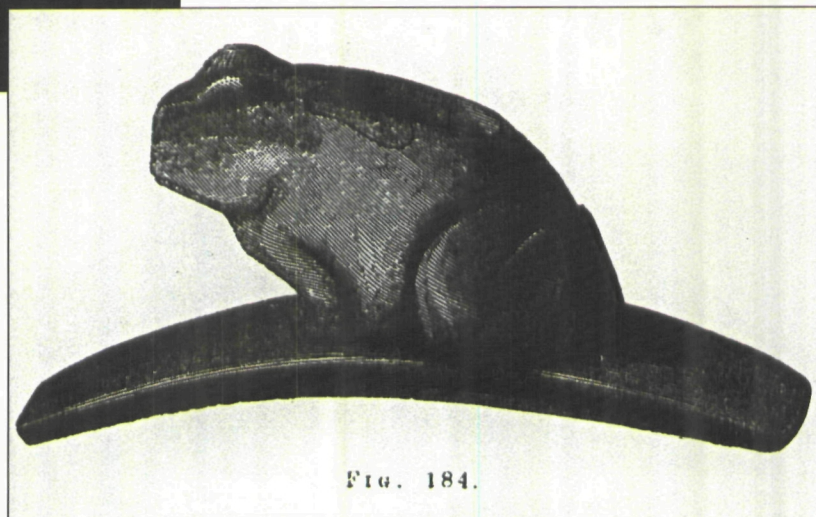


FIG. 184.

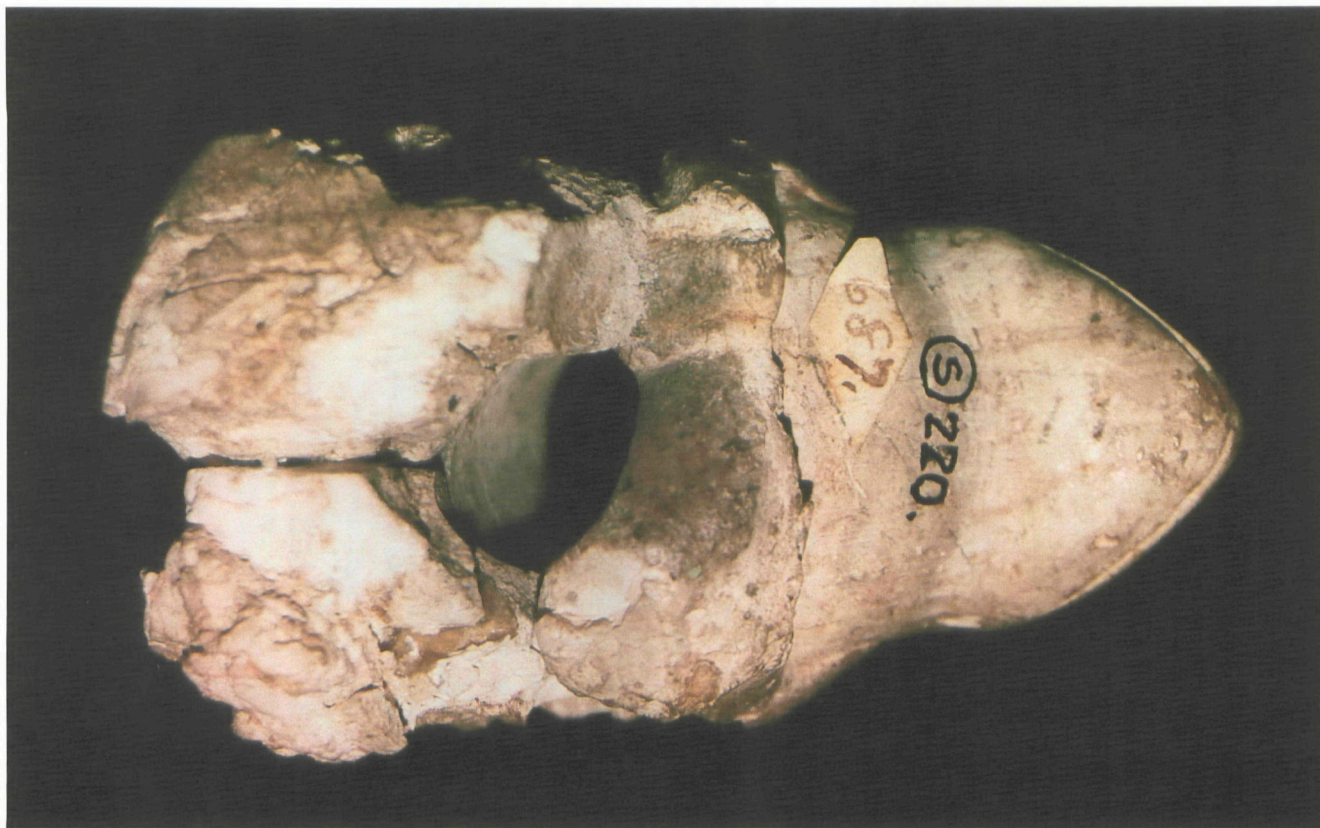


Figure 7



Figure 8

Figures 7 & 8:
Two views of pipe fragment. British Museum photos.



Figure 9

Figures 9 & 10:
Views of fragment.
British Museum
photos.

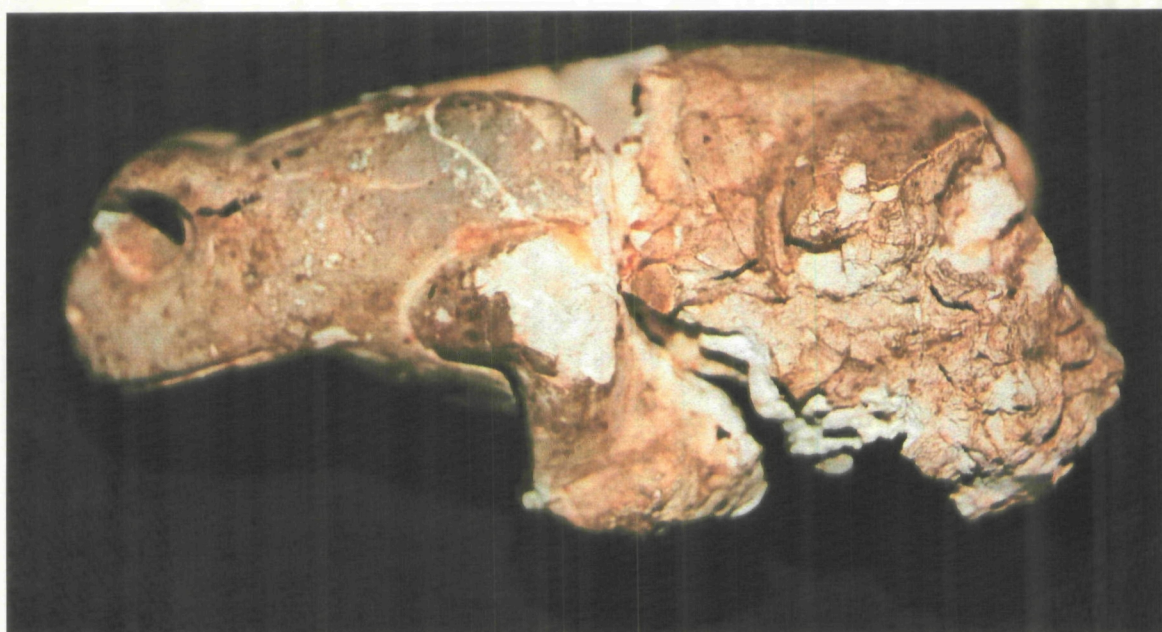


Figure 10

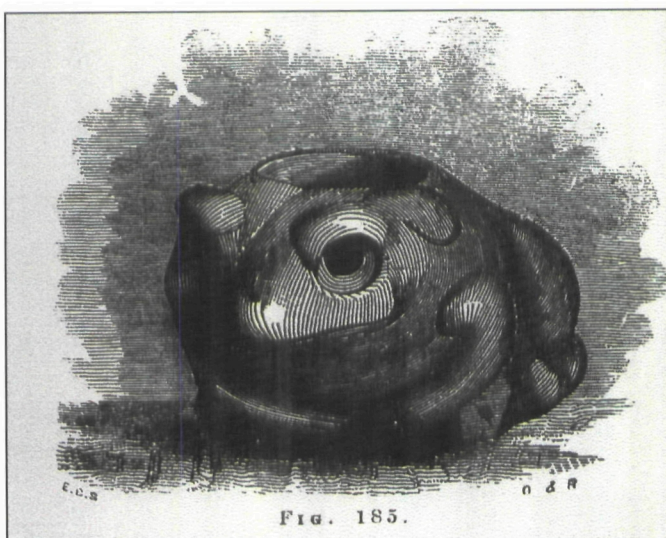


Figure 11

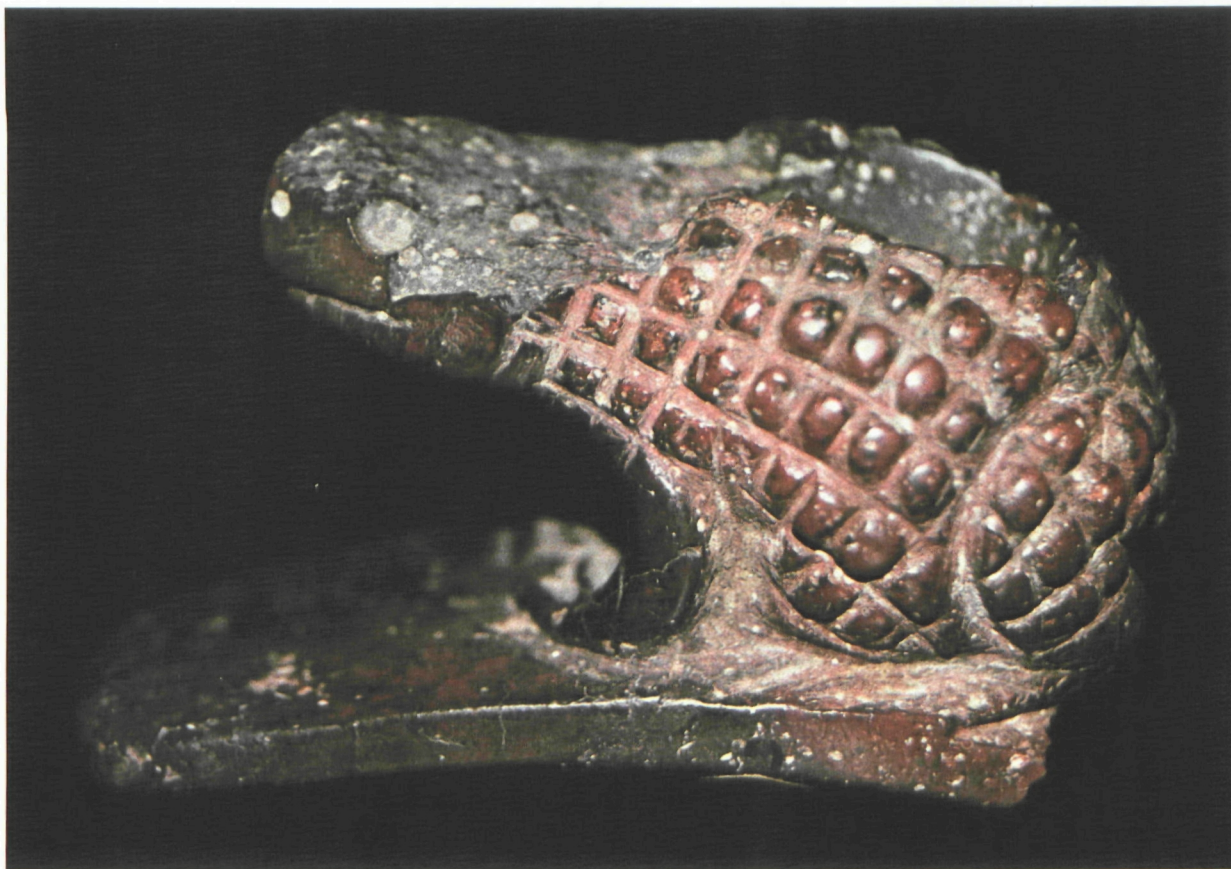


Figure 12

Figures 12 & 13: British Museum photos of toad pipe. Note the skin texture.

Figure 13

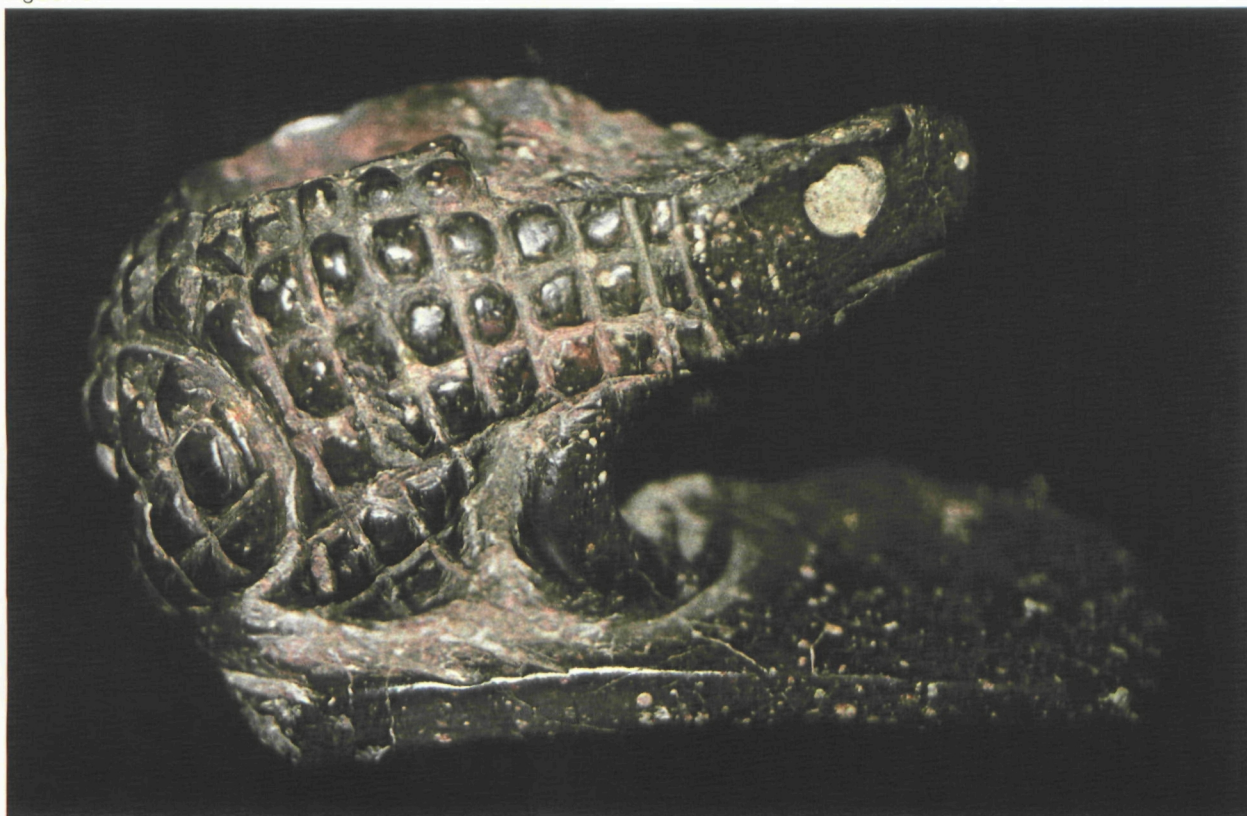




Figure 14

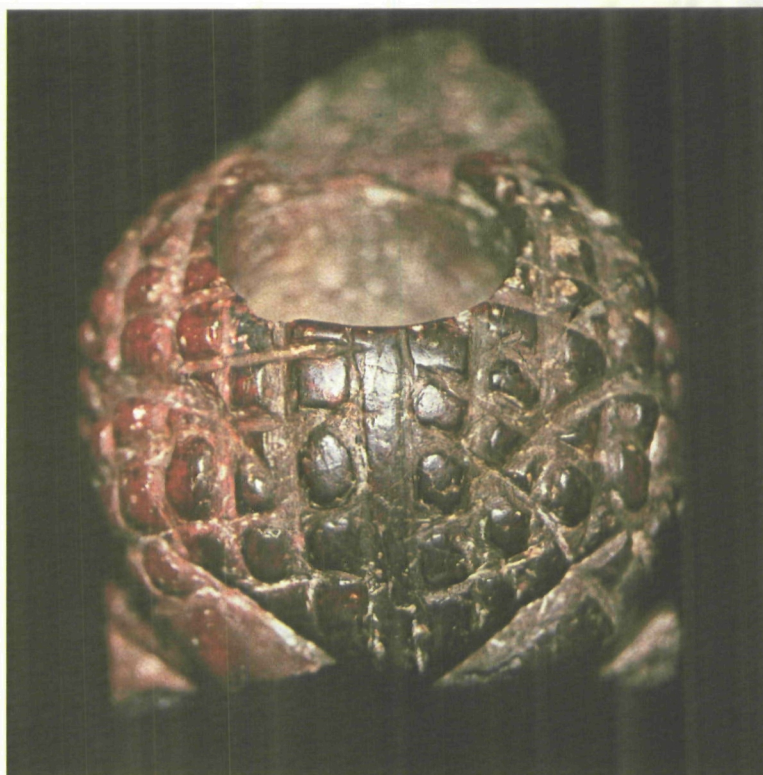


Figure 15

Figures 14-16:
Additional British Museum photos of toad pipe.



Figure 16



Figure 17

Figure 18



Figure 19

Figures 17-19:
British Museum photos of another toad or frog effigy pipe. Note how
skin texture is represented.



Figure 20. Underside of pipe.



Figure 21. Squier & Davis line drawing of pipe.

As is well documented, Ephraim Squier and Edwin Davis, the authors of *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley*, excavated a number of animal effigy pipes from the Hopewell Culture from Ohio mounds before 1860. As was discussed in a previous article, much of their collection was purchased by William Blackmore of Salisbury, England in 1864 for \$10,000, and later acquired by the British Museum in 1931.

Photographs and catalog data of many of these extraordinary artifacts are now available on the British Museum's website <http://www.britishmuseum.org/>. Simply clicking the "research" tab and entering a keyword search for such terms as "Hopewell," or "Ohio" easily locates photographs of many Ohio pieces both common and rare. A search can also be narrowed by using such features as the "image only" preference or by links to related categories.

AN UNUSUAL HOPEWELL PENTAGONAL PENDANT

by
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Pictured is an unusual Hopewell Pentagonal Pendant. It is unusual in that it has been drilled twice and it is made of hematite or a similar iron based mineral. Robert N. Converse states in Ohio Slate Types that pentagonal pendants are rarely made from anything other than banded slate. This pendant is 4 1/8 inches long and was originally found in Ross County, Ohio. From the collection of Ned and Mark Shaw, New Holland, Ohio.

Source: Ohio Slate Types. Converse, Robert N., 1978

Figure 1 (Shaw). A 4 1/8 inch hematite pentagonal pendant made of hematite and with double-drilling. It was found in Ross County, Ohio.



THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF OHIO 2009 FIELD FIND CLASS WINNERS

Flint Projectile Point
Flint Tool
Ground Stone Tool
Slate
Banner Stone

Walt Sperry
Gail Varner
Jay Medici
Dennis Box
Dick Rose

Archaic Bevel
Drill
Miniature 3/4 Groove Ax
Pendant
Tubular Slate

Knox County, Ohio
Knox County, Ohio
Morrow County
Champaign County
Clinton County

Miscellaneous
Children

Steve Valentine
Austin Strickland

Sandstone Pipe
Plummet

Morrow County

TWO OF ONLY TWO

by
Kenny Simper
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The fine bust type birdstone (Fig. 1) was found on a farm near Lawrence, Van Buren County, Michigan. It measures 1 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches high and is made of gneiss - one of the preferred materials for these rare artifacts.

A most interesting feature of this birdstone is the way the eyes were fashioned. They are classed under the "pop-eyed button type" while the eyes on normal bust birdstones are more cylindrical.

In his book, *Birdstones of the North American Indian*, Earl Townsend shows only one such birdstone. It is the fine Lucas County, Ohio, specimen shown on page 569, Fig. F

The Townsend example and the one from Michigan are the only two such birdstones with eyes like these I have ever had the privilege to handle.

Is it possible that there are only two birdstones with this type eye? After owning this fine example for more than ten years, I've arrived at two possible conclusions. One is that on most bust birdstones, the maker did not want to take a chance on damaging the eyes during the tedious peck, grind, and polish manufacturing method. Secondly, the maker may have thought that by bending the rules slightly he could create more attractive eyes on his creation.

Reference: 1959 - Townsend, Earl - *Birdstones of the North American Indian*, Indianapolis.



Figure 1 (Simper). Bust birdstone from Van Buren County, Michigan.